

A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PARTICIPATION DESIRE FOR  
AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR AN URBAN  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF SOCIAL WORK

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 1978

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## ABSTRACT

## SOCIAL WORK

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ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR AN URBAN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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Thesis dated May, 1988

The purpose of the study was to explore the interest of the employees of a Department of Public Safety for acceptance of assistance for problems as could be provided by an Employee Assistance Program. The study was performed using a self-administered questionnaire which was provided for all workers in the department. The research was conducted to ascertain the percentage of employees who would use the program if available at the time they completed the questionnaire, to ascertain if there are any significant differences between employees with a length of public service of 5 years or less and over 20 years as compared to those employees with service of 6 to 20 years. It also looked at some areas which are traditionally considered in performing a needs assessment.



Data indicate that neither prior knowledge of Employee Assistance Programs nor length of public service provided any significant difference in the acceptance or non-acceptance of a program by the respondents although overall data indicate an acceptance for assistance by the respondents. The data also did not prove conclusively that 15 percent of the respondents would use a program if available on the day of the survey. The needs assessment analysis did show some areas for concern for assisting the employees, areas which would become more evident by conducting additional research more specific to that topic.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am pleased to acknowledge the following people who contributed guidance, advice, help, and support throughout the preparation of this thesis: Dr. Melvin Williams, my thesis advisor, Mr. Steven Verlander, who assisted with the statistical analysis, Dr. A. L. Stanford, who read and commented on the drafts, and my family, whose continuing support was crucial to the completion of this work.

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## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

It has been found that employee problems can cause a decline in job performance. Employers, by acknowledging problems as a function of job performance can, by providing assistance, increase worker performance. Help can be provided in the form of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). An Employee Assistance Program can then, by providing help to the employee, also help the employer.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Leavitt (1983) found, in doing research on the subject, that the first EAP programs were started in the early 1970's by companies with reasons that ranged from economic to humanitarian. But earlier in time, post World War II, industrial unions recognized an employee need and thus became the innovative force for the earliest, work-based helping programs. The change in the work place in the mid-1940's was precipitated by the influx of veterans returning to the work force and by the many females who, necessarily, had held those jobs, being forced to leave, or had been compelled to remain at home. Stress became an enveloping force and alcoholism arose. Consequently, the early helping programs focused on the alcoholic employee, that is, on rehabilitation and successful reintegration into the work arena.

In the early 1970's the programs increased and began to

address more varied issues relevant to worker distress, on or off the related job. "The broadbrush approach" addressed marital and family problems, finances, and illnesses other than alcoholism in the services. Family members often became part of the target population (Trice and Roman, 1978).

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

While job performance is the premise on which an EAP operates, it is the performers who are at issue. A worker requires schooling, on-the-job training, and nurturing from the employer to gain experience and become individually productive. A veteran worker, the valuable worker, is a complement to the employer. However, the process from rookie to veteran is lengthy and costly. Given the time and money invested in each worker, it is reasonable to plan on measures of employee retention when feasible.

It can be assumed that all people have problems from time to time; some problems can, however, become debilitating. It could be assumed, too, that given the nature of the work, the hours, the mandatory discipline, and the demands of everyday life, some employees of the Public Safety Department could be in a state of distress which could then affect job performance and which could be reduced by helpful intervention. Would the Department of Public Safety, as an employer, benefit with increased job performance by providing its employees with an EAP? This

research was undertaken to indicate a response toward an EAP from people who are held up as "pillars" of the community while at the same time are looked upon with scorn.

"Standing alone has many connotations of pride and isolation, of wishing to be admired, of the fear of being exposed to devastating inspection, and, of course, of failing" (Erickson, 1963, p.410).

Job performance is a basic point which this paper addresses. However, germane to job performance are the employees who, more specifically, make up the work force of a Public Safety Department. Labor allocation sheets indicate that on any given day an average of 6.5 percent of the employees are out on sick leave. The turnover is high, with many position quotas not being met; jobs are not filled. The overall morale is low; people tend to feel down. In one area of the department, the full personnel staff is set at 45. There are currently 15 openings, and two of the 30 employees are leaving within one month. Of the 30 workers, 18 have been on the job less than one year. This is not an isolated situation, nor is it unique to one department. Employees who report for duty must carry the burden for vacant slots. The morale decreases as the workload increases. Employees become stressed. That is, stress is added onto stress. For everyone experiences tension in day to day personal living at times. At issue, then, is what can be done to keep the valued, but troubled,



employee. It is not conceivable, given the nature of the work arena, to coddle workers. Indeed, the suggestion is not implied, and there is no intention to change departmental rules and regulations.

Intended, though, is the providing of a program which would assist employees, for their own benefit, and consequently increase job performance for the employer's benefit. The service would be an Employee Assistance Program.

It would appear that public safety workers who, it may be hypothesized, are suffering stress at least to the degree of the general population, would benefit from an EAP. McClellan (1985) provides data from a six-month study of 20,000 workers throughout the nation with nearly as many types of jobs. The study indicated that at any one given time 18.7 percent of the population is experiencing distress. It is estimated that 10 to 25 percent of a work force is comprised of alcoholics or substance abusers. Forty-five percent of the employees are females, and 50 percent of the workers are divorced and/or single parents, making sub-groups in the workforce.

These sub-groups bring into the work arena their own unique and often problematic situations. It would be naive to expect that the public safety employees are so unlike the general population. In fact, the very nature of the "business" could only be perceived to add to their

"anxieties."

An EAP would provide services to the employees with problems. Amelioration of difficulties, caused by any factor, by direct delivery of services or referral, if more appropriate, would be the program objective.

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the research was to ascertain both the desire and the need for an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) within a County Public Safety Department and surveyed all police, fire, and emergency medical service personnel, sworn or civilian.

The purpose of the EAP is to not only look at and handle an employee and his problem as specified in department policy but to seek measures for assistance before the problem becomes insurmountable and the employee possibly terminated. "EAP's are an approach to solving one of the most expensive and emotionally destructive problems facing American business, American workers, and, of course, American families. Have you every watched helplessly while a good worker starts to self-destruct because of a serious personal problem?" (The EAP Story, United Paperworkers International Union). An EAP is a professional means of helping workers to help themselves.

The policy at present for poor job performance, for insubordination, and for poor behavior is reprimand or dismissal. There are no counseling sessions given to the

employee, only a Document of Consultation issued upon extremely low performance and a talk with an immediate supervisor. (Though this procedure may perhaps be intended to befriend and to mean well to the employee, it is frequently too late and ineffective.) The Document of Consultation goes through the chain of command, and each step adds another signature to the suggested punishment. No one except the employee, about which the Document of Consultation is written, knows what is causing the problem. Indeed, no one may ever know the cause. An Employee Assistance Program can intervene properly, either at the suggestion of a supervisor or by a self-referral and give the employee an earlier chance to change his behavior, increase his job performance, and remain a valued employee.

EAP's address problems which include alcohol and drug abuse, job stress and occupational dissatisfaction and provide financial, family and marital, and legal counseling. An EAP has been defined as: "policies, procedures, and services which identify or respond to employees whose personal, emotional or behavioral problems interfere directly or indirectly with work performance by providing confidential help and/or professional information, care or referral to appropriate sources of help" (Leavitt, 1983, p.3).

## CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Referring to Leavitt's (1983) definition of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) as stated in the introduction and the premise on which an EAP operates, job performance, Roman and Blum (1985) write of the six components of an EAP's core technology.

The six components of the core technology are:

1. Identification of employee's behavioral problems based on job performance issues. The EAP programs do not minimize supervisory responsibility, but do "provide tools that are more efficient than typical means for dealing with troubled employees" (p.36).
2. Provision of expert consultation to supervisors and managers on when and how to take the appropriate steps on utilizing employee assistance policies and procedures. The EAP provider and supervisor may jointly decide whether a situation is an appropriate EAP referral or strictly a work-related problem to be dealt with by other means.
3. Availability and appropriate use of constructive confrontation. Intervention facilitated by an EAP with work-based leverage.
4. Micro-linkages with counseling, treatment and other community resources. Provision of objective clinical case management for knowledgeably appropriate referrals outside the program.

5. The creation and maintenance of macro-linkages between the work organization and counseling, treatment, and other community resources. The workplace and the service providers historically have existed as though unrelated to the troubled person who is shared between them. Here is the provision of balance and reciprocity of control and understanding for the common good of the worker/client.

6. The centrality of employees' alcohol problems as the program focus with the most significant promise for producing recovery and genuine cost savings for the organization in terms of future performance and reduced benefit usage. Even though it is realistic to expand to other areas for intervention, it is well to recall that EAP's records of achievement were begun and maintained in dealing with alcohol problems. The EAP offers a positive approach for the employed problem drinker which effectuates the cost saving.

Ivancevich et al. (1985) give an overview of the background of worker's compensation and cite cases which have become precedent setters. A rise in stress-related workers compensation suits is attributed to three trends:

1. Each state is responsible for its own worker's compensation guidelines and increasingly are initiating laws which address payment-continued-stress on the job which cause employee problems.
2. The medical profession is becoming more likely

to "accept the cause and effect relationships between work place stress and many illnesses" (p.51).

3. Employees, too, have begun to believe that their job stress is the result of their illness.

Ivancevich's (1985) position is that managers need to begin seriously evaluating their work scenes and take measures to alleviate potential law suits. A "five-point program" is proposed:

FORMULATE A PREVENTIVE LAW STRATEGY. Become familiar with the trend-setting cases and their application to your work arena.

DEVELOP A STRESS DIAGNOSTIC SYSTEM. Conduct anonymous employee attitude surveys. For "only to the extent that management is aware of individual stress levels can it effectively treat or correct the problem" (p.54).

INVOLVE TOP LEVEL MANAGEMENT. Create a list of priorities for stress abatement and become involved in the change. This provides a positive outlook to subordinates.

EVALUATE CURRENT PROGRAMS. Use a process for evaluation. Identify the problem. Provide a viable solution. Follow up for effectiveness and efficiency.

DOCUMENT WHAT IS DONE. Some courts have

decided that management has a responsibility to the employee. Be prepared to show what has been done to assist the employee in coping with the job-related stress.

The manager must be a gatekeeper. All employee stresses and problems are not job-related. But they may interact. The manager is not required to know the cause of personal stress, but it is suggested that they know of resources for intervention where applicable.

Morgulan (1987) writes that "work-related stress disorders have been labeled the new legal right of the 1980's." The statement is made based on his experiences as director of the Work Trauma Hotline and Psychological Assessment Specialists (PAS) Office for six years. The office operates to advise people of their rights as covered by workers' compensation. Work-related stress claims accounted for 14 percent of the occupational disease claims which were filed through the PAS office.

Morgulan (1987) also makes the assertion that "to many employers, workers are just raw material, and when they're broken they throw them away." He states that "change" is the main contribution to work-related stress and through a seven-step "slow motion" process can produce a psychological breaking point to employees. The processes are:

1. A change in the work environment--change in location, new system, promotion--workers try to

cope.

2. Stress is produced by attempting to cope and may reduce work quantity or quality and lead to unfavorable performance evaluations.

3. Continued coping attempts can produce anxiety disorders--hypertension, tension headaches--it is here that the worker is "injured."

4. Observation of the worker or request for help then brings attention to the victim who may be seen as a "problem."

5. The worker is ultimately terminated as the "problem" intensifies.

6. Anger develops. The aggrieved is disbelieving, usually feeling betrayed.

7. Anger turns to depression with the former employee barely functioning.

On assessment the worker may have a legitimate worker's compensation claim. Morgulan believes that employee assistance programs could help lower claims due to "jobs that make you sick."

Gross-Farina (1986) writes on intervention, beginning while the worker is still a "recruit." She explains that in her department, as in most other public service departments, pre-employment assessment puts the public safety applicant through an extensive evaluation before hiring. New employees are not without the necessary behavioral and



cognitive skills to succeed on the job. However, new workers sometimes have difficulties even though competencies have been determined.

Gross-Farina (1986) writes that a program was begun in 1982 by the Southeast Florida Institute of Criminal Justice as a group support for female recruits and grew as follows by providing:

1. Groups to men through their demands
2. Spouse Awareness Program Family Awareness Program
3. Stress management and stress reduction techniques were included in all training sessions no matter the topic of the session itself
4. In-house referral system
5. Conditional, individual counseling at no cost
6. Crisis intervention, marriage counseling, relaxation techniques, and referral to outside sources when appropriate

Gross-Farina (1986) stresses both a slow program development and orientation sessions to gain acceptance of the upper echelon. A recruit block of training provides knowledge of the helping program from day one with the department and so helps to overcome the feeling of "I must handle this myself." Providing help to recruits has enabled the staff to categorize problems into three basic types: current life crisis, adjustment to career or training, or traumatic events of the past. Knowledge of the most likely problem sources has provided informed counseling services, staff support, and the teaching of stress recognition which has reduced what the author terms "unnecessary

terminations."

Keith McClellan (1985) provides data of a six-year federally funded study of 20,000 people in five different regions of this country. Over a six-month period 18.7 people experienced some type of mental disorder, ranging from alcohol abuse (1/3) on through many other problems (2/3)--real or perceived. Stress is one such problem and "accounts for \$32 billion annually in work-related accidents and contributes to heart disease (which, in turn, is responsible for an annual loss of more than 135 million work days)" (p.30). Another of McClellan's points is that the workforce is changing; it is now 44 percent female, only 17 percent are in organized labor, nearly 30 percent are college graduates, and only 7 percent of the total employees are "unskilled." A different life style for the worker is also clearly evident. Today approximately 1/3 of the households have only one working spouse. Fifty percent of the marriages are ending in divorce or separation. The nuclear family is changing as are the family support systems that we knew in the past. "There is a greater need for acceptance of professional counseling than there was twenty years ago" (p.29).

Hall (1984) states that "life is not segmented, but one part is constantly affecting the others" (p.89). And, an ineffective employee is far more time consuming for the supervisor than one who works well.

Objective job performance without judgment or inference is the focus of an EAP, writes Hall (1984). For try as we may, stress in one area of life, as perceived by the one suffering stress, is bound to affect other areas of life as well and can become problematic. Problems, while not necessarily job-related, can affect productivity, morale, and peer and supervisor relations.

Hall (1984), who is the director of a private EAP contracting firm, has found that 73 percent of the contacts which the company has, are primarily related to emotional, family, and substance abuse. Therefore, an EAP is best prepared when capable of intervening with the "broadbrush" approach, that is, familiar with recognizing and servicing all areas of conflict which may impact on one's life.

Hall's experience indicates that for an EAP to be provided the opportunity for timely intervention, it is best realized by educating those who will be serviced through the program. The educational training is provided by the formal means of training sessions as well as the more informal means, such as periodic flyers and posters. Initial exposure to a program provides some use and benefits which are the beginnings of success. Successes, in turn, create use and more successes as employees gain faith in the provision of services.

On August 13, 1986 the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) issued a model drug testing policy

recommending it be used by all departments. The IACP President writes that while there is no evidence of drug abuse as a significant problem that administrators might consider the old adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." The IACP advocates the testing of all applicants and probationary employees. It is suggested that "certain types of property belonging to the department" be subject to inspection without notice. (Types of property is not defined.) It is also suggested that employees who are suspected users be tested and that co-workers who have a reasonable belief that another is a drug user be required to report them.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police Committee Testing Program was designed knowing that public employees are also vulnerable to the temptation of drug use. It explains that these workers, more than in most other professions, are subject to the street environment, its drug use and availability. The job stress adds to the potential for experimentation and even dependency.

In the private sector, drug use is thought to be a personal problem. But to those in public service, it constitutes a breach of public trust and professional standards (Norton, 1986).

Berg and Budnick (1986) write that theories have abounded and empirical studies have been performed regarding the female in public service. There have been theories

which suggest that females whose career choices are traditionally male oriented are most probably predisposed to conducting themselves in a masculine fashion. Empirical studies have shown that more than half of the women, in the beginning, never questioned any lack of their femininity.

However, the male-female differentiation begins to rise, or surface, while in the academies for training. All recruits are trained alike. The objective is the development of "consistent behavior within a department in order to establish objective rather than subjective judgments in the field" (p.37). The "standardized behavior" may, and sometimes does, create ambiguous emotions for a female. Must she adhere to the traditional subordinate role of the female to remain feminine in the eyes of others and, if so, does she lessen career potentials? Is it necessary to take on various masculine characteristics to advance a career in this field? And finally, must she rethink the career choice anew?

Groeneveld et al. (1985) present the results and analysis of a five-year follow-up study on Employee Assistance Program related job separation rates conducted by six experts in employee relations fields. Two hundred twenty-three people were studied; results in two significant areas were found. It was first found that the employee who received assistance from the program as the result of self-referral (rather than supervisory referral) had the

better rate for remaining employed with the employer, 59 percent as compared to 31 percent. The indication, then, is to encourage the self-referrals before job performance falters.

The second result of note is the survival rate by number of involvements with the EAP, usually self-referred, but not necessarily. The result was that 100 percent of the people who were involved with the program three times remained employed and in good standing. The point the study stressed was that given a second and third chance increases job longevity (to say nothing of those employees who merely became a periodic participant of their own volition).

In conclusion, the study confirmed that, in reference only to employees who had been participants in EAP, the middle-aged, married worker with some seniority is the most likely type of participant to remain with the EAP provider. Other than middle-aged and married, the typical person was self-referred and had an alcohol problem or marital difficulties, both of which were counseled in-house with little cost to the employer and no cost to the worker or insurance company. Thus employer cost benefits were realized in two ways. First, there was no need to train a new person due to a termination. And second, the participant received help at no cost to the insurance supplier, which keeps rates lower.

Wrich (1980) found that insurance companies over the

years have increased the amount of payments for outpatient treatment. In the years 1974 through 1977, policies paid 26.4, 25.0, 56.9, and 74.5 percent, respectively, of the total claims for outpatient treatment. A large percentage of the costs could be saved by the use of an EAP.

Relevant to the subject of providing anonymity for testing, Smith, Bruner, and White (1956) performed a study of the relationship between personality and opinions. Preliminary to the gathering of information for their project, the authors processed the ten men they were to study through twenty-seven interviews and studies such as the Rorschach Test. Test interpretations were made by a Diagnostic Council which believed that a stress evaluation was also appropriate. They also believed that the objectives of this part of the evaluation could best be carried out by someone unknown to the men. It was reasoned that the men could be challenged easier by someone for whom they had made no prior judgments and for whom they did not have to maintain an image. As it turned out, seven of the men stated later that they did act out more candidly to the unknown person because they did not feel the interview to be relevant to the package of tests given previously, and knowingly, for the research. Allowing the participants to feel they were unknown permitted the test results which displayed stress to the degree particular to each individual's own personality, and so made its measurement

possible and more meaningful.

Providing the basis for considering attitudes for testing, Shaw and Wright (1967) write that attitudes are a "relatively enduring system of evaluative, affective reactions based upon and reflecting the evaluative concepts or beliefs which have been learned about characteristics of a social object or class of social objects" (p.3).

Attitudes consist of the following characteristics:

1. Based on evaluative concepts and can initiate motivation.
2. Vary on a continuum from highly positive through highly negative.
3. Are learned.
4. Have connotation or implication.
5. Possess similarities to one another.
6. Are relatively stable and enduring.

The characteristics have proven reliable and are considered independently and collectively in constructing attitude scales.

In an evaluation of one company's EAP with 45 participants, Emener and Dickman (1980) learned that 87 percent found the service people helpful; 91 percent had trust in the intervener; 46 percent believed that they would not have sought any assistance had the program not been readily available; and 84 percent would (13 percent probably would not) refer a friend with a problem to the program. But most importantly, 44 percent felt that their problem had been affecting their job.

Shain and Groeneveld (1980) conducted a study in Toronto



using a total of 182 organizations. Seventy-five of these organizations were members of an Employee Assistance Program called "Lifeline." The study grouped the companies by their number of employees. Of the 182 organizations, 9.3 percent employed 100 or less people, and 72 percent of four of this group of employers chose to become members of Lifeline's services. The study goes on to show that as employee numbers increased, Lifeline membership decreased, except in the case of the largest companies or those which employed 100 or more people. This group comprised 2.2 percent of the 182 and all four, or 100 percent, of them were members. From January 1977 to March 1978, eighty-six clients were seen by Lifeline. Of all the cases, 61.6 percent were related to alcohol, 22.1 percent to financial problems, and 8.1 percent were health related problems.

James Wrich (1980) gives data showing the relationship between programs presenting an orientation and program participation. The study included 8,153 employees in 33 programs, ranging from 9 to over 2,000 people. Wrich (1980) reported that a previous research effort indicated that 0.4 of an hour per person would supply sufficient orientation for a program to future participants. The previous study had also concluded that approximately 16 percent of the work force was suffering from some type of problem at any one given time. It was also felt, from a previous study, that should an EAP be available through an employer, 15 percent

of their work force was suffering from some type of problem at any one given time. In polling the programs after one year, and using the previous numbers, it was found that six programs presented a minimum of 0.4 hour orientation per employee. These companies generated 106 self-referrals versus the 41.9 percent referrals which had been expected. Twenty-seven programs offered shorter orientations and received less participation; self-referrals were 60 rather than the expected 98 people. Clearly, people need sufficient knowledge of the program for it to be useful.

The same conclusion is drawn from another study of five companies which was conducted by the University of Michigan (1982). In 1974, the first year of the program for each company EAP, there was no orientation and no self-referrals (referrals were initiated by supervisors). In 1975 there was still no orientation, but self-referrals accounted for 12 percent of the program's caseload. The self-referrals were generated by word-of-mouth satisfaction with the program. Orientations were started in 1976 and the number of self-referred clients became a greater proportion of the intervention; 1976 increased to 35 percent and 1977 rose to 47 percent.

The administrator for a large EAP for a utility company, Hofmann (1984) writes that EAP staff is often thought of as a referral agent, a pinpointer for an individual's problems, and a treatment advisor. This is

true, but the EAP person/staff may carry out "other related duties." These duties include:

#### CRISIS INTERVENTION

We are familiar with the individual who is experiencing an acute situation and requires immediate intervention. But, in addition, the individual situation may be such that many co-workers are traumatized. A group "rap" (therapy) session may facilitate a return to normalcy.

#### WORK SHOPS

Needs awareness can be heightened by educating the target population. Presentations can be brief but informative. Workshops can be looked upon as "wellness programs" and also increase the EAP's exposure for additional information or assistance.

#### AIDS TO MANAGEMENT

EAP's are neither disciplinary nor directly production oriented in nature. Most are pledged to confidentiality and so are in a position for problem resolution unapproachable by other means. This may involve a group rather than individuals who are disgruntled. Know that some problems are too sensitive for public resolution. The EAP may be

"precisely the instrument for justice, peace, and tranquility in troubled waters." Sessions for enhancement of management and communication skills may abate a problem at its outset.

#### PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

In this paper, as in various other sources in the literature, performance evaluation is addressed by recognizing early signs of distress and providing a resource for intervention when indicated.

Blair (1987) writes that while EAP's perform intervention as a result of directed referrals and self-referrals, that a program must also address "enablers" of the sufferer. She explains that the enabler is someone whose actions shield the sufferer from experiencing the full consequences of his or her problem. The enabler "helps, often unwittingly, to protect the person with the problem and thus enables it to continue" (p.6). An enabler assists in maintaining everyone's delusion that the person does not have a problem. An enabler is often a co-worker and very often a supervisor.

In dealing with a troubled employee, a supervisor may become overinvolved and personally attempt to provide assistance by developing a diagnosis and cure. This help may include the making of special arrangements for the troubled person's functioning in the workplace and almost

always causes tension for the well-meaning supervisor/enabler.

Enabling in the workplace could be minimized greatly by educating the workers through an EAP. The enabler would not then become troubled, too, and would be free to carry on their own tasks unencumbered.

Regarding job performance, the basic EAP focus, or deteriorating job performance; the basic focus for supervisory referral to a program, Sonnenstuhl, et al. (1987) write that herein lies a controversy. Posed is the question of whether deteriorating job performance "is a late or early symptom in the natural progression of employees' personal problem" (p.6).

Professional help providers trained to see illness where others would not, believe that overt signs are a late symptom manifested in job performance. This argument is then grounds for the educating and exposure of the EAP as a personal provider to the worker so that self-referrals will be readily sought by the individual in the early periods of personal trouble.

The paper tells, too, of interviewing alcoholic workers who stated that they were aware that they had a problem but they effectively made it unrecognizable to their supervisor. They stated that they believed that they would have sought assistance if they knew, with confidence, where to go. On the other hand, interviews with supervisors revealed that

many became enablers to the troubled employee who often shares with them their financial, family, or emotional problems. The supervisors stated that they acted as a concerned friend because job performance had not yet become so adversely affected.

Schowengerdt (1984) looks at those law enforcement departments which, by relative measure, may be small in comparison to New York City Police, Los Angeles Police, or the FBI; but the "be all things to all people" connotation of the employee is the same, if not more so, due to less job specificity.

The large public safety departments often have resident psychologists or social workers who attend to personal employee problems. Recognize that the smaller departments' directors or chiefs have human employees too, with similar problems. However, it is often difficult to obtain the services of professionals for public safety agencies on a time-share basis. And besides, the employees are often reluctant to come forth or to seek services because the outside source is not thought to be empathetic to their situation. The answer may be an Employee Assistance Program staffed with a professional who has familiarity with the field.

An alternative is to become familiar with helping resources located within the community. In either case, the service provider may be involved in officer candidate

screening, employee counseling, command staff consulting, and/or investigative support.

Darling and Leino (1985) write on confidentiality necessary for operating a successful Employee Assistance Program, where information must be treated with respect and safeguarded. Programs which do not address confidentiality at the onset will not realize self-referred clients.

The authors state that a program involving union participation and collective bargaining may look to Title 42 Code of Federal Regulations (42 CFR), Part 2, along with state statutes for guidance in establishing confidentiality policy. The 42 CFR are designed to ensure privacy for obtaining treatment.

Legalities of confidentiality for each EAP should include the researching of local or state laws along with 42 CFR information, then the placement into position with the ethics or value premise of the target population and its setting.

Specific to one law enforcement department, but relevant to many other, Lambuth (1984) writes on the Indiana State Police Department and its EAP. In 1975 a former captain, himself an alcoholic who retired after twenty-two stormy years of service, proposed to the department's newly formed chaplaincy program his idea for helping other troubled employees. Convincing the chaplain was not difficult. The chaplain and former captain together

approached the department's Superintendent who was not easily swayed to the concept of a work-based helping program.

However, after some time and with the recalling of past incidences and past employee problems, the Superintendent realized that this program might indeed have some basis. As Lambuth (1984) states: "The EAP was soon to expand from one man's awareness of his problem to the education of an entire department. The department's EAP was established to identify employee problems based totally on job performance. The EAP refers employees or their families to treatment and then supports them after treatment. The EAP assists officers or their family members who have alcohol, drug, or emotional problems" (p.36).

Begun initially in 1978, the program was not understood by the employees, and they were wary. But by educating supervisors and "pushing" program amenities the EAP became the country's first of its kind in any state police department or state agency. Developing awareness through training has been the key to success, assisting the workforce and thus benefiting the work organization.

Training began and continues by informing "supervisors that deteriorating work performance among employees is the main issue they need to address when approaching troubled employees. Supervisors are not to become diagnosticians. They simply advise employees that their work performance is



unacceptable and that help is available from the Indiana State Police EAP" (Lambuth, 1984, p.38).

Lambuth (1984) writes that visiting the EAP liaison/provider is the first step as referred by the supervisor. This is where confidentiality begins. The supervisor is informed only that the contact was made. All further contacts are strictly between the EAP and the employee.

Presently, orientation to the program is begun with the recruits, thus increasing their awareness of stress and coping skills and allaying the stigma of asking for personal assistance. The department feeling is that "it is important for employees to understand that they are being given the opportunity to volunteer for treatment with no punitive action taken against them if their work improves after treatment" (p.37).

In developing the EAP the Indiana State Police addressed such as: one out of every six adults suffers from chemical (includes alcohol) abuse, depression, or other disabling emotional problems. Most sufferers are between 30 and 55. These are potentially the most experienced employees. Consequently, since the program's inception the Indiana State Police Department has seen fewer accidents, less absenteeism, higher productivity, and decreased turnover. The department superintendent has been quoted, "the same problems that exist in your population exist in

your department because a wide cross-section of people are represented in the department" (p.37).

The Lincoln, NB city police department has its own EAP which evolved from an EAP for all city employees. Brennan et al. (1987) write that the original "external" service provider was most often held suspect by police personnel. The police department employees were "distrustful" of the "outsiders"--those who are not part of the system. And besides, "outsiders simply cannot understand or help them" (p.48).

Police employees then, too, have difficulty in trusting a system which operates for the department, an "inner system." Here confidentiality becomes an issue and the "John Wayne syndrome" is more apt to surface (admitting to and seeking help for problems is a weakness).

Program planners identified areas that created problems for this department's population noting recent research which indicated that psychological stressors often become more debilitating to living than physical stressors.

Factors include:

1. Responsibility for other people's lives
2. Frustration with court system and police administration
3. Role confusion and conflict
4. Ambiguity of many laws
5. Performance of tasks inconsistent with personal values
6. Negative public image
7. Sudden unpredictable crises
8. Frequent exposure to death and accidents
9. Family disruption due to shift changes,

internalized feelings, and displaced anger.

After much consideration, program staff developed an EAP which incorporated both inside and outside assistance. The "inside" service providers are department employees who are given some training for dealing with troubled co-workers. The "outside" service provider is, of course, the completely professional staff which ministers to the city as a whole.

The new program began in April 1984 and within two years the results were increased 200 percent by supervisory referrals, 46 percent self-referrals, and 67 percent family use. In 1984, 9.3 percent of the employees made contact with some area of the program. The nature of the problems indicate substance-related 28 percent, marital/family 35 percent, emotional/psychological 33 percent, and legal/financial 4 percent.

It appears that faith and trust in the program have increased both by the individual and by the supervisors, many of whom believe that referral to the EAP is an effective "corrective-action tool."

#### FUNCTION OF AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

An EAP can strive to operate largely on self-referrals and probably succeed by properly orienting the employees to the concept of the services. In the same vein, attitudes must be addressed. Attitudes toward asking for help can be

"softened", if not overcome, by emphasizing confidentiality and so building trust.

Camaraderie and esprit de corps are beneficial and necessary forces to this work group and provide an excellent base area for assistance exploration. That area is termed "peer counseling." This occurs presently on a small scale over a cup of coffee or, perhaps, at a "choir practice." However, there could be a structured program using people who volunteer to assist others. The volunteers would attend training sessions taught by professionals and then have a professional with whom they could confer and refer at any time for additional helping guidance (Capps, 1984).

It is noted that prevention is a goal of EAP's and is another justification for the service. If these services are well instituted, workers will seek assistance in the early stages of tensions that could become problematic. Many problems, such as those related to finances, marriage, or other family sources, are manifested on the job. Stresses often result in absences and accidents which might have been prevented. The county could benefit economically by recognizing preventive intervention in a loss maintenance role.

Another cost cutter would be in the area of insurance; lower premiums due to a possible decrease in accidents and chronic illnesses. Also, insurance companies now pay for more outpatient treatments which often include counseling.

It is a fact that if an insurer pays for this service, the payments will be reflected in higher premiums. Much outpatient counseling could be handled by the EAP whose intervenors would be on the same payroll as the employee, and consequently the service would not be billed to the insurance company.

Aside from the preventive and cost factors mentioned previously, the research was planned to give an indication to the department of the size of the population that could benefit from a program. It will also show the administration if most workers like their jobs, and if so, considering the investment in a valued employee, it would be only logical to try and keep them. Significant to the employee is that even though the workforce is of a considerable size, there is still some room for concerns for the individual.

The data for the study are readily available. Emphasizing the project's concern for the employee as an individual, without being overly romantic, should provide an asset for factual reporting by the respondent.

It is believed that providing early intervention to workers in distress greater than that which they can handle alone in the short term would see an increase in long-term benefits. Benefits accrue to the employee through relief and to the employers through job performance.

The EAP would be directed to all workers within the

public safety facility--police, fire, and medical emergency, and would include all support divisions; a total target population of approximately 1500. This number is at least doubled with the inclusion of certain family and household members who would in any case be indirectly affected. However, also directly affected would be those with whom the worker has contact in carrying out daily duties, the public in general and/or co-workers.

It is proposed that the number of department employees will increase by one-third within the next three to five years due to the increase in county population. More people, then, would be affected directly by an EAP.

The intended policy effects due to an EAP are expected to be an increase in job performance due to a decrease in turnover, less absenteeism, and higher morale. The cost effectiveness would be realized by the retention of trained personnel and possibly lower insurance premiums due to fewer accidents and medical costs (Wrich, 1980). The program would require the salary of one full time staff member who would also perform many services which are covered by insurance or are paid out-of-pocket by the client.

Aside from providing an available, life-enhancing qualitative change to the employees, workers would have the benefit of a program designed for their particular job force. Easy accessibility and confidentiality would make a quantitative change, in that more workers would be exposed to,

and use, the services of skillful assistance (Gross-Farina, 1986).

There are, at present, very few EAP-type programs within the public safety sectors, and those which exist are relatively new. Noting the value premise, real and imposed, admittance to the need and asking for assistance in problematic personal times is not easy. It is not uncommon for these employees to deny any personal condition less than super-human and to denounce the problems associated with themselves. This value assumption is true of, and passed on through, the hierarchy in a department. But on the other hand, there is a great deal of concern for the "fallen" employee (usually conveyed after termination), like one who has an alcohol problem or marital problem. (There is no grace within this work force or, indeed, within society, for one who burglarizes or rapes; and an EAP is not looking to change that.) It has been suggested that a favorable administration outlook for intervention only adds to a more general acceptance of an EAP (Archambault et al., 1982).

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

The terms stress and assistance acceptance upon which the research is based are best defined as follows: Stress, as a variable, was not measured other than by the respondents' conceptions of its meaning and personal feeling. The aim of the research was not to determine what causes stress to the individual, nor to judge its intensity,

for what causes stress and to what degree is a different matter to each person.

#### STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The study addressed the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1: Respondents who had knowledge of an Employee Assistance Program before the survey will be more likely than those respondents who did not know of an Employee Assistance Program to show acceptance for a program for the Department of Public Safety.
- Hypothesis 2: The study will indicate that 15 percent of the respondents would use a program if it were available on the same day that they answered the questionnaire.
- Hypothesis 3: Employees who have a length of public service between six and twenty years will indicate a greater acceptance of an Employee Assistance Program for the Department of Public Safety than will the employees with less or more service.



## CHAPTER III

## METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

An exploratory survey was conducted to provide data for the thesis. An exploratory survey was chosen as the most appropriate to the topics under study because as Babbie (1979) writes, "exploratory studies are most typically done for three purposes: 1. simply to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding, 2. to test the feasibility of undertaking a more careful study, and 3. to develop methods to be employed in a more careful study" (p.6).

PARTICIPANTS AND SETTING

Participants in the study were employees of a Department of Public Safety. Included were both sworn and civilian employees of the Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Bureaus which comprise the Urban Department. There were 703 sworn police employees, 514 sworn fire employees, 157 sworn Emergency Medical Service employees, and 167 civilians.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The instrument used for collecting the research data was a self-administered anonymous questionnaire developed specifically for the project and was based on a review of the literature and knowledge of the population. There were a total of 34 questions. Twenty-eight questions requested a

response using Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD). Two questions requested a yes-or-no reply and three questions requested a reply by number (age, length of service with the department, and total length of years in public service).

The questionnaire (see Appendix B) was pilot tested on 15 employees of another department prior to its being presented to the Department of Public Service employees. This was done for item clarity, length of time to complete the questionnaire, and to solicit comments. The final version of the questionnaire takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

#### DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Permission to conduct the research was granted by the Director of Public Safety, who suggested that a letter be sent to the Department and Bureau heads a few days before the research was to begin to inform them of the study to be conducted (see Appendix C). A questionnaire was made available to each employee of the Department on the same day as the issuance of pay checks. Each questionnaire had a letter (see Appendix A) on its reverse side explaining the Employee Assistance Program concept and the purpose of the research. The letter also explained that the questionnaire could be returned by interoffice mail or by its placement into the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) box.

DATA ANALYSIS

Where applicable, questions were analyzed as separate variables and the results presented in raw numbers or as percentages. Some questions were analyzed in combination by creating bivariate tables and presenting the results in tables or figures. An index was created using 10 questions for measuring attitude toward assistance acceptance and was applied to other questions singly or in combination for further analysis. The index, t-test, and analysis of variance were used to reject or accept the hypotheses. For each of these tests a .05 level of significance was used.

## CHAPTER IV

## PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The study was conducted using a questionnaire which was made available to each employee of the Department of Public Safety with the issuance of the pay checks. The questionnaires were made available to all employees, a total of 1541. The average age of the respondent was 34.4 years with an average of 10.7 years of public service.

Ninety-four respondents answered that they had some knowledge of an EAP before receiving the short descriptive letter with the questionnaire. The study also provided data indicating that 179 respondents strongly agreed that they liked their job, 128 agreed, 15 disagreed, and 4 strongly disagreed. There were 10 respondents who did not reply to this question. The response rate was 21 percent, with a total of 336 questionnaires being returned. Therefore the resulting presentations are based on the 336 questionnaires.

An index was made to create an attitude acceptance score toward an EAP and assistance using question numbers 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 28, 29, 31, 32, and 33. The score was reversed on six questions (9, 10, 14, 28, 29, and 33) which asked for responses counter to the other four. The index scores could conceivably range from 10 to 40, i.e., 10 questions, all answered Strongly Agree, would total 10 and 10 questions, all answered Strongly Disagree, would total 40. A score of 25 would indicate an attitude neither pro

nor con towards acceptance. Figure 1 depicts the results-- Range 1 through 3 indicate a score of less than 25 on the Acceptance Scale, a total of 42 respondents. Number 4 through 8 indicate scores of 25 to 40 on the Acceptance Scale, or a total of 294 respondents. Two hundred sixty two (77.98 percent) of the respondents had scores in the range greater than 25, 42 (12.5 percent) scored less than 25, and 32 (9.52 percent) scored 25. The following values were calculated: Mean 27.8363; Median 28.0000; and Standard Deviation 3.4091.

As an additional aid to understanding the respondents' attitudes toward assistance, and in what areas, the means and standard deviations were calculated for each question and are presented in Table 1.

A bivariate table was made relating one's prior EAP knowledge, question 4, to acceptance for personal utilization of a program, question 28. Table 2 and Figure 2 present the results indicating that a total of 164 respondents agree that they would personally use a program (46 had prior knowledge of an EAP, 118 had no prior knowledge), while 156 respondents answered that they would not use a program (46 had prior program knowledge, 110 had no prior knowledge).

Questions 4 and 29, comparing one's program knowledge with their opinion as to whether the program would be a good

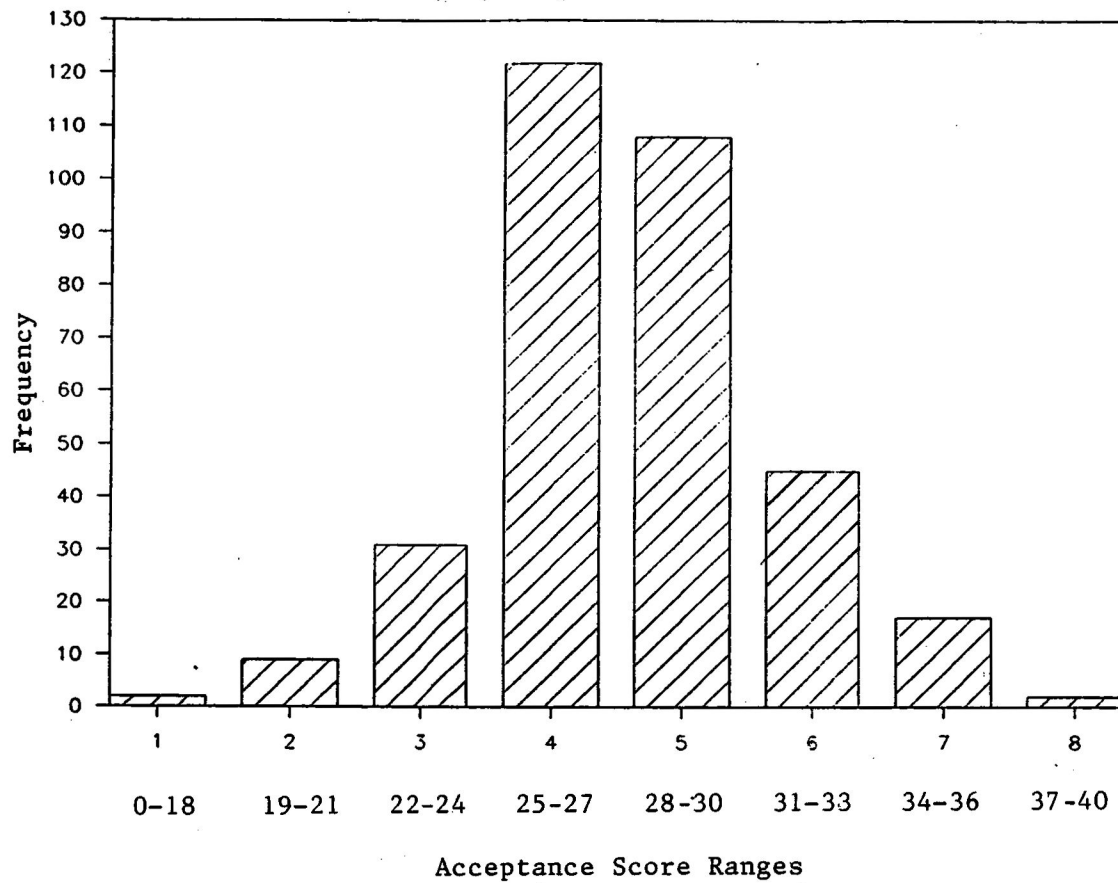


Figure 1. FREQUENCY OF ACCEPTANCE SCORES OF RESPONDENTS  
INDICATING ACCEPTANCE OR NON-ACCEPTANCE TOWARD  
ASSISTANCE

TABLE 1. MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF ATTITUDES  
FOR ASSISTANCE

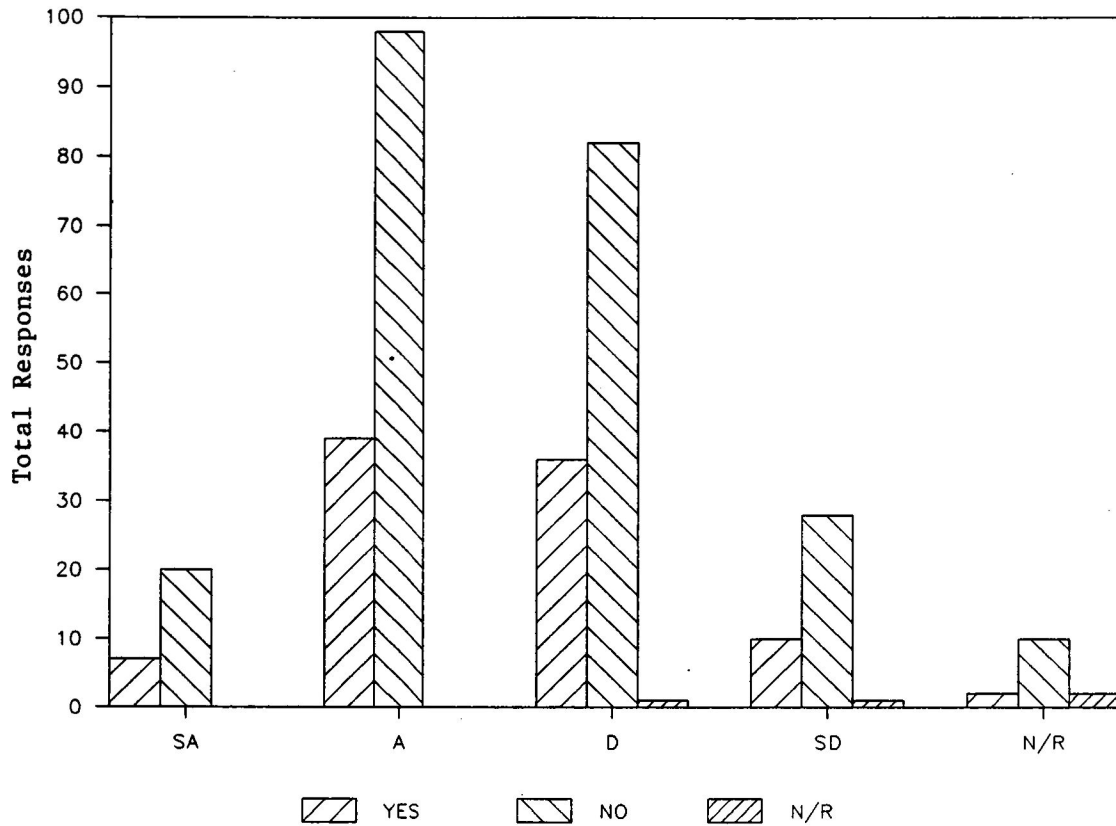
Question	Mean	Std. Dev.
4. Did you know what an EAP was before this study	1.729	0.484
5. Know anyone else with EAP where they work	1.820	0.407
6. Some stress can have a positive effect	1.981	0.704
7. I feel stress at work	1.703	0.661
8. I feel stress at home	2.158	0.740
9. Stress is lessened by talking about it	1.867	0.598
10. I feel embarrassed if I say I am stressed	2.796	0.722
11. Concern over family and career incompatibility	2.906	0.825
12. Aspects of my life could be more compatible	2.169	0.768
13. Rap sessions would be beneficial to me	2.412	0.743
14. I have been helpful to others in stress	1.831	0.493
15. Reluctant to discuss problems except in family	2.251	0.759
16. Someone in my work would be more helpful	2.195	0.704
17. Considered help for a problem within last year	3.132	0.815
18. Sought help for stress problem in last year	3.303	0.672
19. Stress is a large factor in my life	2.372	0.950
20. I like my job	1.521	0.645
21. Stress is a factor in my job satisfaction	2.079	0.756
22. Took two or more sick days when not sick	3.473	0.737
23. I have used all my sick leave	3.720	0.530
24. Been disciplined by department in last year	3.174	0.981
25. I could have prevented the action	2.978	1.071
26. Charged with preventable accident in last year	3.557	0.683
27. I liked my job more in beginning than now	2.572	1.009
28. I would go to an EAP if available	2.528	0.813
29. An EAP is a good idea for the department	1.843	0.681
30. I ease stress by talking it out with anyone	2.532	0.786
31. Others cannot help one suffering problems	3.214	0.678
32. Problems are best worked out alone	3.212	0.634
33. I would find an EAP useful today	2.367	0.802

Strongly Agree = 1.000  
 Agree = 2.000  
 Disagree = 3.000  
 Strongly Disagree = 4.000

TABLE 2. PROGRAM KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO PERSONAL  
USE OF A PROGRAM

Attitude Toward Personal Program Use	Number of Respondents With Knowledge		Number of Respondents With Knowledge	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	7	2	20	6
Agree	39	12	98	29
Disagree	36	11	82	24
Strongly Disagree	10	3	28	8
No Response	2	1	10	3





Would You Use A Program

Figure 2. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO WOULD/WOULD NOT USE  
AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IF AVAILABLE BASED  
ON PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF A PROGRAM

idea for the department were also related by bivariate analysis. Table 3 and Figure 3 present the results.

A total of 297 respondents agree that a program would benefit the department (92 had prior program knowledge, 205 had no prior knowledge), and 27 respondents disagreed (2 had prior knowledge, 25 did not).

In comparing the two analyses, it would appear that while more people are in agreement for a program, many also believe that while available assistance would generally be beneficial to the department, their families would not use it.

Question 28--I would use an EAP if available and Question 29--an EAP would be good for the department were analyzed individually to indicate the difference in attitude between personal use of a program and department benefit of a program. The results are presented in Table 4 for comparison and indicate that while only 164 of the 336 respondents believe they would personally use a program, 297 of the total respondents believe that a program would be beneficial to the department.

It is probable that a program orientation would provide the basic information to increase the answers for agreement. Indicated in this data, too, is the idea that most people feel there is a need for assistance in the department and the help may be an EAP even though many do not really know its capabilities.

TABLE 3. PROGRAM KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO PROGRAM  
AS GOOD FOR THE DEPARTMENT

Attitude Toward Program for Department	Number of Respondents With Knowledge		Number of Respondents With Knowledge	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	28	8	66	20
Agree	64	19	139	41
Disagree	0	0	17	5
Strongly Disagree	2	1	8	2
No Response	0	0	8	2

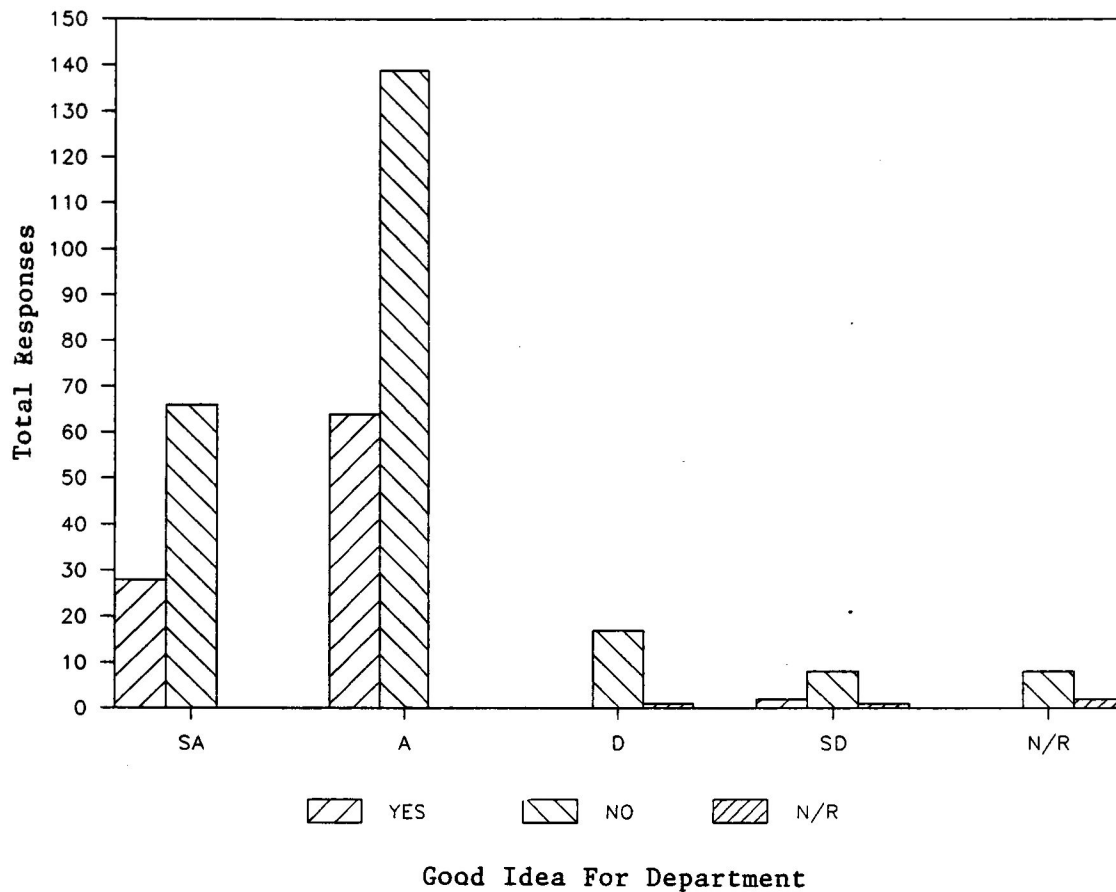


Figure 3. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO BELIEVE THAT AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS A GOOD IDEA FOR THE DEPARTMENT BASED ON PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF A PROGRAM

TABLE 4. COMPARISON OF PROGRAM ACCEPTANCE  
FOR SELF AND FOR DEPARTMENT

Attitude for Program  Usage	Program Acceptance by Respondents for Self		Program Acceptance by Respondents for Dept.	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	27	8	94	30
Agree	137	41	203	60
Disagree	119	35	18	5
Strongly Disagree	39	12	11	3
No Response	14	4	10	3

The first hypothesis was tested using a two-tail t-test relating one's prior Employee Assistance Program knowledge to attitude of personal program use. The analysis revealed a statistically non-significant difference [ $t(314) = 0.138$ ;  $p > .05$ ]. A t-test was also performed relating one's prior Employee Assistance Program knowledge to the attitude of a program being beneficial to the department. This analysis also revealed a statistically non-significant difference [ $t(317) = 2.204$ ;  $p > .05$ ].

Table 5 presents the means and standard deviations by acceptance scores based on program knowledge. Both acceptance scores are greater than 25.0000, thus indicating a general acceptance, although somewhat higher for those respondents with prior Employee Assistance Program knowledge. No statistical test was used for further analysis.

Question 33--I would find an EAP useful to me/family member today, was used alone to obtain the information for the second hypothesis which is that 15 percent of the respondents would indicate that they would find a program useful the day they completed the survey (an immediate need for assistance). Table 6 presents the results of those who would find the program useful at the time of the study.

The table indicates that 11.61 percent of the respondents strongly agree that they have a current need for which they would go to an assistance program, or 3.39

TABLE 5. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF RESPONDENT'S  
ACCEPTANCE SCORES BASED ON PROGRAM KNOWLEDGE

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Knowledge	28.2872	3.1820	10.1249
No Knowledge	27.7206	3.4706	12.0448
No Response	24.1250	1.5155	2.2969

TABLE 6. RESPONDENTS WHO WOULD FIND A PROGRAM USEFUL  
AT THE TIME OF THE STUDY

Would Use a Program at Time of Study	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	11.61	39
Agree	44.94	151
Disagree	30.95	104
Strongly Disagree	7.44	25
No Response	5.06	17



percent less than 15 percent as stated in the hypothesis, based on research literature. It had been planned to add the strongly agree and agree responses to obtain the total respondents with an immediate need. However, in doing so, the total (56.55 percent) appears too high. It is not clear if perhaps the question was misinterpreted and is too close to that (question 28) which asks if a program would be used if available (upon need was inferred). Table 7 presents the results, for comparison, of the separate analysis for each question--would you use a program (question 28) and (question 33) would a program be useful today. The table indicates totals which are too similar to indicate those respondents with a current need. It is found that question 33 does not provide a clear indication for accepting or rejecting this hypothesis; the results are inconclusive.

Related research indicates that there are many factors which can be examined to conduct a needs assessment, although most data are normally obtained through personnel records. The study was planned to gather data which are indicative of some information that may be noted for this type of assessment.

The study questions used for needs assessment are listed separately in Table 8, which presents the means and standard deviations for each needs assessment question. Possible indications by question are:

#6. Disagree/Strongly Disagree may indicate that the

TABLE 7. COMPARISON OF USE OF A PROGRAM IF AVAILABLE  
TO RESPONDENTS WITH A CURRENT NEED

Attitude for Program Usage	Would Find Useful Today		Would Use if Needed and Available	
	Percent	n	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	11.61	39	8.04	27
Agree	44.94	151	40.77	137
Disagree	30.95	104	35.42	119
Strongly Disagree	7.44	25	11.61	39
No Response	5.06	17	4.17	14

TABLE 8. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR  
NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA QUESTIONS

Question	Mean	Std. Dev.	n
6. Stress can have positive effect	1.981	0.704	331
7. Feels stress at work	1.703	0.661	334
8. Feels stress at home	2.158	0.740	334
11. Concern with incompatibility between family and career	2.906	0.825	330
17. Considered seeking help within past year	3.132	0.815	332
18. Sought professional help within past year	3.303	0.672	333
19. Stress is a large factor in home, social, or workplace	2.372	0.950	333
21. Stress is a factor in job satisfaction	2.079	0.756	329
22. Used more than two sick days when not really sick	3.473	0.737	334
23. Sick leave is exhausted	3.720	0.530	329
25. Received discipline which could have been prevented	2.978	1.071	184
26. Charged with preventable accident	3.557	0.683	328

Strongly Agree = 1.000  
 Agree = 2.000  
 Disagree = 3.000  
 Strongly Disagree = 4.000

respondent has trouble coping in a workplace filled with stress-producing situations.

#7. Related literature stresses that increasingly employers are now being held liable if the stress creates "injury" to the employee.

#17. Some of these respondents may currently be considering help and don't know how or where to seek help without jeopardizing some part of their lives.

#18. An EAP might have serviced these employees at no cost to the employee/insurance carrier.

#22. 8.33 percent of the respondents indicated Strongly Agree and Agree.

A bivariate table was created with questions numbered 6 and 7 and is shown in Table 9 by numbers of respondents to indicate a relationship between whether stress can have a positive effect and feeling stress at work.

Of the respondents, 4.17 percent (14) strongly disagree that stress can have a positive effect while strongly agree or agree that they feel stress at work. And 9.23 percent (31) of the respondents disagree that stress can have a positive effect while indicating that they strongly agree or agree to feeling stress at work. These workers (a total of 45) may benefit from intervention in the form of stress management as they may not have substance abuse, marital, or financial difficulties which are creating a problem. It may behoove the employer to intervene regarding employee stress,

TABLE 9. FEELING STRESS AT WORK RELATED TO  
STRESS CAN HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT

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Stress Can Have A Positive Effect-Question 6		Number of Respondents					
		SA	A	D	SD	NR	ALL
<hr/>							
Feels	SA	35	74	13	10	2	134
Stress	A	30	119	18	4	1	172
At Work	D	4	16	3	0	0	23
Question 7	SD	1	3	0	1	0	5
	NR	0	0	0	0	2	2
		—	—	—	—	—	—
		70	212	34	15	5	336

---

especially if it may be originating in the workplace. As indicated by Morgulan (1987) "work-related stress disorders have been labeled the new legal right of the 1980's" (p.9).

Another form of intervention may be performed by establishing a peer counseling program. The research was planned to gather data for this modality which many of the employees perform routinely as a part of daily job functioning on a person-to-person basis while servicing the public as well as co-workers. The intended thought, though, is a possible formal group formation based on employee acceptance.

The data indicate that 193 of the respondents agree that rap sessions would be personally beneficial (question 13) and that 233 respondents indicate that they believe someone in a like work position would be more helpful or understanding of their problems (question 16). Either or both of these areas could provide the means for peer counseling, noting, too, that 315 respondents indicated that they have been helpful to someone else during a time of stress.

A third hypothesis looks to one's length of service as function of program acceptance. More specifically, that those employees with public service between 6 and 20 years will indicate a greater acceptance toward assistance. This group was chosen and the hypothesis is based on the concept that a shorter service often sees the employee with "rookie

fever" toward the tasks which are performed. Employees with 5 years or less service are kept energized by looking forward to promotion into various levels, even if remaining within the same general job description, and look forward to regular pay increases. Those with service over 20 years often find that they have attained a "good enough" position and/or they merely are doing their time and waiting to retire. The middle group of employees, then, are the groups under study. Research points out that this group, potentially between the ages of 26 and 50, are the greatest asset to the workforce; they are the veterans. It is felt that the veterans, especially, will see the values of an assistance program because of experiences, their own and those of others like them.

The study by age grouping indicates that 281 employees who responded were between the ages of 26 and 50. Of these, 253 scored on the acceptance side of the Acceptance Scale. The study by length of public service employment shows 219 respondents in the categories between 6 and 20 years. Of these, 198 indicated an acceptance for assistance.

A bivariate table was created to show the relationship between age and service. The results indicate 209 of the respondents were between 26 and 50 years of age and employed in public service between 6 and 20 years, they are veterans.

The veterans, especially those who have not attained the position height they looked to, may begin to feel

stagnated or can foresee no advancement. But many are reluctant to forego the seniority they have built up. It is not an easy task to look for a new career at 40 years of age if most of one's work experience has been in law enforcement. The workers in this group may feel trapped and frustrated. These feelings may create discomfort. The individual may then have less job satisfaction than was felt earlier in his/her career.

A bivariate table was created relating one's length of service to their liking the job more in the beginning than in the present. One hundred thirty six (65 percent) of the 209 respondents who have 6 through 20 years of service answered that they did not like their job as much now as they did in the beginning.

An analysis of variance was performed to ascertain statistically the differences between the respondents grouped by length of service of 6 or more years through 20 years and those respondents with less than 6-or-more-than-20-years. Table 10 presents the results indicating that a significant difference was found in five areas (questions) and are indicated by the asterisks.

In analyzing the responses, the data indicate that both groups agree that stress can have a positive effect, however, those with 6 through 20 years feel significantly greater that they experience stress at work and that stress is a large factor in their overall life. The data indicate



TABLE 10. ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE BETWEEN TWO GROUPS OF  
EMPLOYEES - GROUPED BY YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Q. No.	Length of Service < 6yrs or > 20yrs			Length of Service ≥ 6yrs or ≤ 20yrs			F Value
	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	
4	116	1.672	0.471	213	1.760	0.489	2.499
5	113	1.769	0.422	215	1.846	0.398	2.626
6	115	1.973	0.613	216	1.986	0.750	0.022
7	116	1.887	0.629	218	1.605	0.658	14.360***
8	116	2.275	0.729	218	2.096	0.740	4.497
9	116	1.870	0.552	215	1.865	0.623	0.006
10	114	2.964	0.623	215	2.707	0.756	9.740***
11	114	2.982	0.703	216	2.865	0.881	1.494
12	115	2.156	0.708	215	2.176	0.800	0.051
13	116	2.362	0.727	214	2.439	0.752	0.809
14	115	1.817	0.469	217	1.838	0.506	0.140
15	116	2.275	0.679	218	2.247	0.799	0.103
16	115	2.182	0.744	217	2.202	0.684	0.061
17	116	3.301	0.748	216	3.041	0.837	7.831**
18	116	3.422	0.606	217	3.239	0.699	5.654*
19	115	2.608	0.905	218	2.247	0.951	11.97***
20	113	1.539	0.655	213	1.511	0.641	0.139
21	113	2.123	0.769	216	2.055	0.751	0.603
22	116	3.456	0.719	218	3.481	0.751	0.085
23	115	3.687	0.519	214	3.738	0.536	0.700
24	116	3.129	1.000	217	3.198	0.972	0.371
25	64	2.984	1.046	120	2.975	1.088	0.003
26	113	3.584	0.650	215	3.544	0.701	0.251
27	115	2.704	0.954	217	2.502	1.032	3.029
28	112	2.589	0.800	210	2.495	0.819	0.977
29	113	1.955	0.646	213	1.784	0.693	4.738
30	111	2.468	0.772	216	2.564	0.792	1.101
31	115	3.191	0.674	216	3.226	0.681	0.205
32	114	3.219	0.606	211	3.208	0.650	0.021
33	112	2.383	0.773	206	2.359	0.818	0.068

$$df = n(1) + n(2) - 2$$

\* p 0.025

\*\* p 0.01

\*\*\* p 0.005

Significance level = 0.05

Strongly Agree = 1.00

Agree = 2.000

Disagree = 3.000

Strongly Disagree = 4.000

also that this group has more difficulty, coming from within themselves, in sharing the feelings of stress. This is not too surprising, given the facts that to show one's feelings is a rather new concept and that stress, and indeed its ventilation is not a most favorable attribute for employees in the public service sector.

The data also indicate that the veteran employee has been more likely to have considered and sought professional assistance. While not minimizing the concern for employees in the less than 6 or over 20 year service brackets, these results indicate, as does the related research, that the veteran employee may be the very basis for beginning a helping program.

## CHAPTER V

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

System, that is, society, workplace (department) and individual values interact and become interwoven as interpersonal and personal functioning occurs. And while the premise of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is to aid employees by focusing on job performance, it is beneficial to first think of a Public Safety Department, the worker, and an EAP as sub-systems each consisting of values, some in common and some not.

High moral, lawful, and humane values are explicitly set out as standards for Public Safety Departments. Employees are hired through a determinative process looking at those same values. It can be no other way. For, ideally, the Department and its employees are impervious to sin. The caretaker and protector must be "the salt of the earth," friendly, honest, and sturdy. One must be able to look with high regard to those who carry duties of credibility and authority. But each employee (an individual system who is part of other sub-systems, family, etc.) comes into a department with his/her own values, such as level of concern for others, moral responsibility, or practicality, which are guides for personal behavior.

Intrapersonal as well as interpersonal conflicts may arise. Ideologically, based on the value premise of the department and its functions, the workers must be somewhat

"super-human," extraordinary to themselves as well as to those they serve. However, all people have some frailties, and public safety employees are no exception. It is, then, the frailties that the EAP addresses and services (Gross-Farina, 1986).

An EAP working with the concept of humanistic values, which are at the core of the social work profession, could provide a comfortable and logical means for assisting a population whose very work revolves around them. These values are the right to:

1. Confidentiality;
2. Self-determination;
3. Achieve one's maximum potential;
4. Participate in policy development affecting one's life;
5. Participate in society's responsibility to provide a pursuit to happiness and the necessities of life to its members;
6. Provide advocacy for self and others;
7. Timely expression and transmission of feeling and effect;
8. A need to belong, holding all people on a human level;
9. Accept responsibility to change or abolish institutional oppression to protect human rights; and

10. Assisting others in achieving self-direction and independence such as through "Autonomous Social Work Practice."

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A foreseeable limitation to the study is that which is created through research design. That is, the questionnaire must have well-designed questions in order to bring out an honest response from a suspecting population. For this population, by nature and training, is suspicious. Assuring complete anonymity to the respondent is thought to take care of such a limiting factor.

A source of error to the proposed research could occur in the self-administering of the questionnaire. It is possible that some people would take it too lightly or find it amusing, and in turn either not complete the form or give false responses. Pro and con questions should be mixed throughout so that the respondent will have to read each question to furnish an answer. Simply going straight down a column and checking off responses in a line will create ambiguity and will be detected by the analyzer. It is proposed that removing those questionnaires from the study will not create a false analysis. It is believed that affording complete anonymity by not requesting sex, race, or rank information would ease an honest response from many people who are, and do indeed work, in jobs where caution and suspicion can be attributes.

### SUGGESTED RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

It is believed that further research could enhance the results of this study which indicates a general acceptance for assistance by the employees. Clear results may be obtained by again using an anonymous self-administered questionnaire, but requesting that each employee hand the results back before perhaps the end of roll call or at the end of the watch. In this manner the results would prove more indicative of the whole population.

It is suggested also that some open-ended questions be included which could provide a better understanding of the areas which are creating the most stress. A program could then be focused on the areas which create more tensions.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The research was conducted using a questionnaire made available to all employees on pay day and had a response rate of 21 percent. The reasons for not responding can only be assumed as in any other survey conducted in this manner even though providing a self-administered, anonymous, and short questionnaire was considered the most likely method for collecting meaningful data.

The data did not prove the hypotheses stating that approximately 15 percent of the respondents would indicate the need for an EAP on the day they completed the questionnaire. It is felt that the question which was used for this data was misinterpreted as the results are very

high when analyzed as had been planned.

The study did indicate, in general, a great acceptance rate for assistance by the employees who have been employed in public service from 6 to 20 years than those with less or more service. Data indicate also that while many questions provided no significant difference between the groups that the group of employees with service of 6 through 20 years is more likely to feel stress at work and is more reluctant to talk about it than are the other workers.

The study also indicates no appreciable difference between those who knew what an EAP was previous to the study and those who did not for agreeing or disagreeing on their feeling for assistance for the department. However, previous knowledge or not, it was found that while an individual may think an EAP is good for the department (agree 88.4 percent vs. 8.63 percent disagree, 2.98 percent no response), they may not think as highly of using it personally (agree 48.81 percent vs. 47.03 percent disagree, 4.17 no response). As the related literature indicates, perhaps an orientation would be instrumental in changing this view. And as the literature also indicates, a few EAP successes create more successes as faith in a program builds.

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## APPENDIX A

TO ALL PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES:

As part of the requirements for the Masters of Social Work degree from Atlanta University, I am conducting research for my thesis which is entitled "An Employee Assistance Program for a Department of Public Safety."

An Employee Assistance Program is designed specifically for the population it serves. It would service employees with any need for assistance, whether personal or family related (emotional, marital, financial, etc.) by providing information, counseling, care, or referral to other appropriate sources of help as decided upon between the employee and the Employee Assistance Program provider. ALL CONTACTS WITH THE PROGRAM WOULD BE IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

A questionnaire is attached so that you may give your opinion and will keep you, the respondent, completely anonymous. Please fold them as indicated and place them in the locked FOP boxes, from which I will collect them personally.

So, please fill out the questionnaire or take it home to complete it with your family and return it soon. Please know that your response is greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

B. J. Bower

## APPENDIX B

For each of these statements, please circle the symbol on the right side of the sheet which best represents your level of agreement with the statement (SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree). Remember that you cannot be identified from this form, so answer freely.

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your length of service with the county? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long have you been a public service employee? (Include the service with other departments or agencies.) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did you know what an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) was before reading about it with this questionnaire? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_
5. Do you know anyone else who has an EAP where they work? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_
6. I feel that some stress can have a positive effect. SA A D SD
7. I feel stress at work. SA A D SD
8. I feel stress at home. SA A D SD
9. I feel that stress is lessened by talking about it. SA A D SD
10. I feel embarrassed or self-conscious if I tell someone else that I am feeling stressed. SA A D SD
11. I am concerned that my family life and my career choice are not compatible. SA A D SD
12. I feel that different aspects of my life could be made more compatible (home, work, church, social life,

## APPENDIX B (continued)

etc.).	SA	A	D	SD
13. Attending rap sessions with other employees would be beneficial to me.	SA	A	D	SD
14. I feel that I have been helpful to another or to others in their times of stress (either personal or work related).	SA	A	D	SD
15. I feel reluctant to discuss problems with anyone other than my immediate family or closest friends.	SA	A	D	SD
16. I feel that someone in my work position would be more helpful and understanding of my problems.	SA	A	D	SD
17. I have considered seeking professional assistance for a problem within the last year.	SA	A	D	SD
18. I have sought professional help for a stress-related problem within the last year.	SA	A	D	SD
19. I feel that stress is a large factor in my home, social, or work life.	SA	A	D	SD
20. I like my job.	SA	A	D	SD
21. I feel that stress (no matter the source) is a factor in my job satisfaction.	SA	A	D	SD
22. I have taken more than two sick leave days within the last year when I was not really sick.	SA	A	D	SD
23. I have used all of my sick leave.	SA	A	D	SD
24. I have been disciplined (written or verbal) by the department within the last year.	SA	A	D	SD
25. If yes to question 24, I believe that I could have prevented the action.	SA	A	D	SD

## APPENDIX B (continued)

- |     |   |    |   |   |    |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|
| 26. | I have been charged with a preventable accident within the last year.                                       | SA | A | D | SD |
| 27. | On the whole, I liked my job more in the beginning than I do now.   | SA | A | D | SD |
| 28. | I believe that I/someone in my immediate family would go to an EAP if available.                            | SA | A | D | SD |
| 29. | An EAP sounds like a good idea for the department.  | SA | A | D | SD |
| 30. | I can ease stress by talking it out with anyone who will listen.  | SA | A | D | SD |
| 31. | I do not feel that other people can help one who is suffering from problems.                                | SA | A | D | SD |
| 32. | I feel that problems are best worked out alone.   | SA | A | D | SD |
| 33. | I would find an EAP useful to me/a family member today.   | SA | A | D | SD |
| 34. | Please feel free to make any comments such as RACE, SEX, CURRENT PROBLEM, OR APPLICABLE IDEA OR SUGGESTION. |    |   |   |    |

Again, thank you.

## APPENDIX C

TO ALL BUREAU AND DEPARTMENT HEADS

As part of the requirements for the Masters of Social Work degree from Atlanta University, I am conducting research for my thesis which is entitled "A Needs Assessment and Participation Desire for an Employee Assistance Program for an Urban Department of Public Safety."

The research is intended to poll all employees of Dekalb County's Department of Public Safety, sworn and civilian, using an anonymous questionnaire for responding and returning to me. The questionnaire will be available so that one can be given to each employee at the time of the issuance of paychecks.

Please know that each individual's timely response and return is deeply appreciated as the study must be conducted between March 10, 1988 and March 24, 1988 for analysis.

B. J. Bower